

5 Mar 2023

Worship Sheet for Sunday 5 March Take up your cross

Following Peter's wonderful confession of Jesus as the Son of the Living God, Jesus rather brings his friend down to earth – making it plain following him would be no easy ride – indeed that suffering lay ahead for them as well as for him. Jesus speaks more openly about his forthcoming death. We are reminded that holding firm to Jesus today won't be easy.

Call: The Lord invites us to follow him. We take up our cross, help us to follow you, Lord. The Lord invites us to grow in our relationship with him. We are his disciples, help us, Lord, to grow in faith. The Lord invites us to answer the question, "Who do you say that I am?" We say, you are the One who meets us here, the Lord, our God.

Pray : Lord, we are not always very good at being still. From earliest childhood fidgeting came to us naturally and in later years we do not lose the tendency to become unsettled and distracted. And yet, you are not particularly bothered about how still we remain in our seats, whether our eyes are open or closed, whether or not we put a pandrop in our mouths at sermon time – what interests you is whether we recognise your presence and power in our midst, whether we notice you at work in our daily lives, whether we welcome your love and grace – in short, whether we enjoy your presence. We can even "Be still" when we are busy and active. Lord, this morning as we gather here in church – some us fidgets, some of us unsettled with our minds on other things (or people), with legitimate concerns help us to be still enough to recognise that you are here with us, that for all your power and goodness, you love each and every one of us and you long to draw us even closer to you in love and grace. In a way, we are like Moses, we stand on holy ground, we are in the presence of God, the Holy One is here. Help us to sense your presence, to welcome you and to accept the forgiveness and grace of our Saviour, your Son Jesus Christ and like Moses, and perhaps with many of his hesitations, to go out from this place ready to work with you and for you in the world at large, that your mission may be our mission, and your will, ours. Hear us further as we pray together saying the Lord's Prayer: Our Father...

Reading Mark 8:31-38 Take up you cross.

Thought Jesus' mind is moving towards Jerusalem and to his arrest and almost certain death that will follow. While grateful for Peter's confession of him as Messiah, he is anxious that Peter and indeed the crowds recognise that following him will be a challenging one – for some of them a journey fraught with danger. Had Jesus simply been wanting to expand his following, surely he could have played down the dangers and challenges and without telling lies, portrayed the Christian life in a more pleasant and rosy way? Instead, he tells it how it is, drawbacks and challenges included. We need to watch that we aren't economical with the truth or confine ourselves to telling folk what they want to hear. We do people no favours if we make out that life with Jesus is all plain sailing. It isn't. But neither are we left to our own devices. He is with us and he equips us by his Spirit to face and overcome the challenges that undoubtedly will come our way. We won't need to take up our cross in a literal sense but we are asked to live our lives to please Jesus not ourselves. It won't always be easy but we have all God's gifts to work together to advance his reign of love. Let's not be afraid to follow Jesus – because even with the challenges his way is ultimately the best.

Praise MP 435 Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray Lord, help us to think of prayer less as a chore or an effort and more as a gift from you, a channel of blessing - not so much what we do for you, but more a spiritual gift from you to us. You are a generous and gracious God, you aren't reluctant to bless, you want to give us all that we need to live lives that reflect your glory and bring joy in all its fullness. You are not averse to material things but you don't want them to be an end in themselves, rather to use the things of this world to bring spiritual blessings and of course while you are interested in us you see us in the context of community and relationships. So we come with our cares and concerns, our joys and hopes, for ourselves, our friends and families, the

church, the community, our neighbours (next door and across the globe). We come with particular burdens and particular opportunities – but we come to YOU believing that you delight to receive us, and it is your plan to encourage and bless, both us and those for whom we pray. We pray for your Church with all its plusses and minuses, for the wonderful work that is done in your name, and for the mess we sometimes make. We are far from perfect but we belong to you and we ask for a clearer sense of your presence and purpose and for a readiness for us to take up our cross and follow you and to be seen to be yours. Make us mindful of our links with your people globally, and our obligations to our brothers and sisters whose situation is markedly different to our own. Bind us together in Jesus Christ and show us ways that we can make that more meaningful. We pray for the trouble spots the world over, for those who suffer whether publicised or not; for the sore and sorrowful locally as well as internationally, for the people of this town and hinterland, for all in need whether known to us or not. In our prayer walk we remember those who work in or use the Medical and Sports Centres. SILENCE. Lord, in the stillness make us and all for whom we pray aware of your presence and power and make us content to leave all these things in your hands, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Blessing May the Lord bless you. Amen.

Notices

- **World Day of Prayer services Fri 3 March – 2pm at Caledonian Ct and 7pm at the Baptist Church.**
- **Youth work coffee morning Sat 4 March 10am – 12 noon**
- **Short Kirk Session meeting Sun 5 March in Session Room at 1045.**

To assist those unable to access material via the internet we have established a phone line where people can phone in to hear the mini service or sermon.

01674 902624.

To hear the mini service people just need to dial in and wait. To hear the sermon, after dialling you need to press 1 then #. In either case there is a few seconds delay while the message loads so tell folk not to hang up! If folk press 1 for the sermon before the intro finishes the system doesn't pick up on it and it defaults to the mini service. The message now says wait until after the tone before pressing 1 but give it a few seconds after that and do press # after pressing 1.

Sermon, prayers and news (or links to them) will be uploaded to our website www.oldandstandrews.com and the Old and St Andrew's Facebook page. Feel free to copy this and pass it on to Church members or friends who might not use the web or social media

Please continue to pray for one another and support where you can and remember that the congregation is united in love wherever we are and however we are worshipping.

Stay safe! May the Lord bless you!

Ian

Rev Dr Ian A McLean